

Undun Wind

Inducted into the IBHA Hall of Fame March 16, 2019

I remember the moment well as it will be forever seared into my memory. It was April, 1994, and my husband, Phil & I had just arrived at Stallion Avenue at the Midwest Horse Fair. We were there to meet with our new friends, Bob & Marlene Dreifke; whom we met the summer before when we photographing a horse show.

Marlene took me over to meet her stallion and to this day, I remember the overwhelming feeling of being totally and utterly thunderstruck and at a complete loss for words. For those of you who truly know me, rendering me speechless is something that does NOT happen often. Standing before me was the most stunning, beautiful, magnificent horse that I have ever seen in my life! UNDUN WIND. He captivated me that day with his striking glistening coppery coat, his charisma, and his spirit. There was something about him; maybe it was that "look of eagles" as they say the good ones have...but you just knew that he was undoubtedly something very, very special. At the time I first laid eyes on him, I was looking for a new horse breed...or maybe it was that he found me...I don't know, but Undun Wind is what brought me to the IBHA world. To this day, his memory still holds me captive.

But to tell Undun Wind's story, we must start at the beginning. Undun Wind, or Chip as he was known as around the barn, came from a humble background and not from the Regal pleasure bloodlines that we know today.

It was the fall of 1990 when Bob, Marlene and her dad were at Schmitty's Auction barn in Plain Wisconsin. Anyone from Wisconsin could tell you that Schmitty's auction barn was not the place to go to buy a horse, much less a stallion prospect. Schmitty's was a killer pen. People mainly went there to buy tack, which is what Marlene and her dad were doing. Shortly after their arrival, Bob; who isn't one to stand around for long; got bored and went for a walk to look at the horses. He came back and told Marlene that he found a nice weanling. Marlene basically dismissed him and reminded him that you just didn't go to Schmitty's to buy horses. Bob left and came back a short while later; insisting that this was a really nice horse and Marlene should come and look at him. At that point Marlene's father looked over at her and said "I thought you were training him better than that!" You see, Marlene & Bob were dating at the time and prior to meeting Marlene; Bob didn't have much experience with horses.

Marlene knew that she would not get any peace until she went with Bob to look at this horse. Bob took her to a pen of sickly looking weanlings that had come in from a ranch in Nebraska.

When she commented that there wasn't a nice looking horse in the pen, Bob remarked that she couldn't see him yet as he was in the back of the pen. Before she could protest and much to her dismay, Bob scaled the fence of that pen and entered into the herd of the sick weanlings. It was like the parting of the sea as the herd of the weanlings scattered to the sides. There in the back of the pen she saw him...Undun Wind...and was completely dumbfounded at how nice a horse he really was. Needless to say, they bought him that day. And because no one ever went to Schmitty's to buy a horse, Bob had to make a 200 mile round trip to go home and get the horse trailer, while Marlene stay behind with Chip. As it turns out, Marlene was "training" Bob better than they thought!

Two months later, when he was merely 7 months old, Chip was turned out in the back pasture and ran and kicked like most young horses do. Bob was cleaning the stalls in the barn and when he & Marlene went out a short time later to bring the horses in, Chip was standing totally 3 legged and would not put any weight on his left hind leg. Even in the distance, they could see that it was swelling. They managed to hobble Chip into the barn and called their vet. He said "Vet School" and stabilized the leg with a cast for the trip. They feared that Chip broke something in his leg sliding to a stop as he liked to do.

They UW Vets said immediately that if the bones in the joint were crushed, that they could not save him and took him in for x-rays. When Dr. Stone came out, he was just shaking his head and Bob & Marlene thought the worst; never even beginning to imagine that he would say what he did. Dr. Stone said that the bones were not broken and told them to come and look at the x-ray. As soon as they saw the x-ray, they could see the huge nail in his foot. It turned out to be an antique square nail with no head, which is why no one saw it at first as it was totally inside the foot. The nail was over 5 inches long and had gone thru the foot, past the navicular (actually touching it) and into the tendon sheath. Chip had surgery on the foot to remove the nail. A hole was drilled thru the top of his foot where that nail was and as they had pulled it out the bottom of the foot, the vets simultaneously inserted a drainage tube to keep the injury open so it could drain for weeks and so strong antibiotics could be administered to the injured foot. The vets told Bob & Marlene that if they had seen the nail and pulled it out at home, the injury would have closed up on itself and he would most likely have died from the resulting infection.

In reality, Chip should have died, but he ended up healing from that injury.

As a two year old, Bob and Marlene were doing some ground work with Chip to prepare him for his training under saddle. Marlene just didn't like what she was seeing in his movement. Normally a beautifully strided horse, he just seemed a little off - as if he was short striding on

his right hind leg. They consulted Dr. Peterson at the Milton Vet Hospital. After taking some x-ray's, he told them that Chip would need plates & screws in this ankle. Chip's right hind ankle had been damaged due to all the weight bearing he had done on this leg while recovering from the injury he had as a weanling. At that time, no one knew that he should have had splints in both back legs to help with this.

They elected to do the surgery to Chip's leg to insert the plate and screws. Dr. Peterson really liked Chip and said that they should breed him to a few mares prior to the surgery, just in case. The surgery was done right on the farm and Dr. Peterson inserted two small plates and numerous screws that would be there for the rest of Chip's life to help stabilize his right hind foot and ankle.

He had warned the Dreifkes that even though Chip was a really easy going young stallion, that this would change with 6 months of complete stall rest. They were warned not to feel sorry for Chip and try to walk him. He said that every surgery he had ever done like this, that had gone bad, was because owners or trainers had taken the horses out of the stall too soon. Dr. Peterson was convinced that at the end of this mandatory 6 month stall rest, that Chip would become rather rank due to being confined for so long.

However, Chip's personality never changed during this time. He remained the calm, easy going stallion that the Dreifkes had grown to know and love. He never had to be sedated, even when it came to sawing the casts off his back leg with an electric saw and as a matter of fact, when they did this, they barely even had to hold onto him. Dr. Peterson had gotten so comfortable with Chip, that if he stopped by and the Dreifkes were not home, he could care for him without anyone holding him. This was a true testimate to the kind of horse Undun Wind was. He ended up healing from this surgery, but they had made the decision not to show Chip under saddle so they wouldn't put any pressure on his right hind leg.

Chip's show career started out with a bang and never let up. His first show was at a WBHA show in Darien, WI. Bob decided on a whim to take him. Marlene was unable to go because she had to be at the Dane County Fair with her daughter Karrie, who was also showing horses that day in 4-H. They prepared both Chip and Bob and sent them off to the show. This was the first time that Bob had ever shown a horse of any kind in any class. When Bob got to the show, Chip decided he didn't want any part of coming out of the trailer. Bob actually had to turn him around and use a butt rope on him. They figured that it was probably because any time prior to this show, the only time Chip was hauled off the farm was to the vet clinics and get poked and prodded...and he didn't want anything more to do with that. Chip ended up

Reserve Champion Stallion that day and Grand Champion Stallion the following day. Bob was hooked.

Chip was shown as a three and four year old and then semi-retired from the show ring because he was becoming so popular as a breeding stallion. He was the IBHA Reserve Honor Roll Aged Stallion in 1994. On the Wisconsin Quarter Horse Circuit that year, Chip won the Circuit Championship at every major show. In 1997, Chip was shown on the WBHA Circuit and lightly thru the midwest and was the IBHA Reserve Honor Roll Aged Stallion and Honor Roll Amateur Stallion. By 1999, Bob & Marlene decided to put more time into showing Chip with the dream of earning his halter superior. They hit the road hard, even going down to Florida. In 1999 and 2000, Chip was the IBHA Honor Roll Aged Stallion and by the conclusion of the 2000 show season, the dream was realized and Chip earned his Superior in Stallion Halter. In 2002, they took Chip down to the World Foundation Quarter Horse World show where he stood Reserve World Champion Senior Stallion and then World Champion in the Get of Sire class.

More than being just a good show horse, Undun Wind was a true ambassador for the buckskin breed. Bob & Marlene truly did their part in promoting him and his accomplishments - which were many; but building his vast fan base was all Chip's doing. From the time that they started promoting Chip as a young stallion at Horse Fairs all over the Midwest and the East Coast, he quickly developed a following of adoring fans. His regal look and Charisma commanded the attention of everyone who saw him. But it was his gentle, curious & playful nature that had his fans returning year after year to the Horse Fairs to see him. Chip was a crowd favorite at the Midwest Horse Fair and you could always tell where his stall was on Stallion Avenue, simply by the crowd of people standing in front of it. For every appearance that Chip would make in the coliseum, either in his stallion review or the buckskin breed demos, a crowd of new admirers would follow him back to the barn to learn more about this beautiful stallion and as a result, many bought a breeding to him in hopes of getting their own buckskin.

One of the announcers from Equitana, Alec Jeffery shared this comment. "Over the years, I have seen 100,000 horses of all breeds and all disciplines and it is interesting how just a few have that "look at me" appearance, manner or attitude. Clearly, Undun Wind is one of these horses. As soon as I saw him in his stall at Equitana USA 2001, I knew immediately that he was a horse that I could really promote."

It was during the time that Undun Wind was being promoted and representing WBHA in our breed demonstrations, that WBHA saw a serious increase in their membership and in the

number of people registering buckskin horses in Wisconsin and coming to our shows. For a long time, a lot of the horse's names being announced at the WBHA shows had "Undun" in them. I truly believe that Undun Wind had a lot to do with introducing many people to the world of IBHA, myself included as I had no idea that IBHA even existed until that fateful day when I first laid eyes on him.

While at the horse fairs, Undun Wind was often sought out by clinicians when they needed a horse to demonstrate on. One of Bob's more favorite memories was when a massage therapist asked to use Chip as a demo horse for her clinic. Chip was truly enjoying his massage and during the course of the demonstration, she started to massage an area of Bob's arm. Clearly distressed by the fact that she quit working on him and was demonstrating on Bob now; it only took about 30 seconds for Chip to put his head in Bob's chest and gently push him out of the way. He then proceeded to step between Bob and the massage therapist so she could continue to massage him. The crowd loved it.

One of the more special memories that Marlene shared with me happened at the Illinois Horse Fair in Springfield. It was at the end of a long day when a young boy in a wheelchair was brought to their stalls by his parents. The young boy suffered from Cerebral Palsy and was physically unable to reach out and touch Chip. Marlene asked his parents if it would be ok if she opened the door and brought Chip near him. His parents agreed and Bob led Undun Wind over to the young man. It was as if Chip just knew that this young man couldn't come up to him and he immediately lowered his head into this boy's lap. At that point, this little boy laid his head on Chip's face and attempted to hug him for several minutes, while Chip never moved a muscle. During this entire time, both this young man's parents and Marlene were quietly shedding tears over the obviously special moment in time. His mom said that all her son wanted to do was to touch THAT horse.

Undun Wind carried that quiet, gentle, and playful personality with him wherever he was. Home at the farm, you could often find him playing with Zeus, the Australian Cattle Dog, chasing one another around the arena. He loved people, it didn't matter how big or little they were. When Karrie's kids were little they would often help care for Chip, both at the farm and at the horse fairs. They would often ride them with a little help from Grandpa Bob when they were merely 2 years old. Over the years, Chip was also often taken to senior resident communities and nursing homes to interact with the residents there because of his calm, gentle nature.

Beyond his show career, some of Undun Wind's greatest accomplishments were in the foals that he sired. It was Bob & Marlene's hope that Chip would pass on his fluid movement and temperament to his foals and boy, did he ever! His foals all displayed that same "in your pocket" people loving disposition of their sire. They were intelligent with beautiful movement and were highly trainable individuals that made them perfect candidates for performance under saddle in the show pen; and yet they were pretty enough to be successfully shown in halter. His foals excelled as true all around horses. Many of Undun Wind's foals were shown in Dun Factor & halter in the morning, went on to compete successfully in the performance under saddle classes only to be able to run with the best of them in Barrels and Poles. Undun Wind became known as one of the best producers of all around horses in the buckskin industry during his time.

Undun Wind's foals have won:

IBHA Halter & Performance ROM's,
IBHA Championships in both the Open & Amateur Divisions
IBHA Superiors
IBHA World Show Championships, Reserve Championships, and Top Ten Titles
IBHA World Show All Around Titles in both Open & Amateur Divisions
IBHA Gateway to the World All Around and Reserve All Around Titles
IBHA Honor Roll and Reserve Honor Roll Titles.
IBHA Honor Roll All Around Horse & Reserve All Around Horse in both Open and Amateur Divisions
IBHA Honor Roll Honor Roll and Reserve Honor Roll Performance Horse
And have successfully been piloted around the ring by young Walk Trot competitors.

Perhaps one of his crowning achievements as a stallion is the fact that he sired 3 horses to win the Coveted IBHA Supreme Championship; Unduns Cool Kelo, Menominee Wind and Unduns Classy Leaguer. To the best of my knowledge, I believe that Undun Wind may be the only stallion to sire three or more IBHA Supreme Champions to date.

Over the course of his career as a breeding stallion, Chip sired over 800 foals of all different breeds – Buckskin, Quarter Horse, Paint, Pinto, Appaloosa, Palomino, Arabians, Thoroughbreds, Saddlebreds, and even a couple of Tennessee Walking horses. It seemed that no matter the breed, mare owners from all over and all different breeds wanted a chance at his striking color and good temperament.

It is clear that Undun Wind had a great impact as a breeding stallion on the IBHA world. He sired many excellent all around horses. His popularity at the Horse Fairs brought new

members to not only IBHA, but also to WBHA, which helped WBHA grow into the club that it is today.

Undun Wind passed away in 2014 when the pain from the arthritis in his right hind leg became too much for him to live comfortably and he is missed terribly to this day. The most amazing part of Undun Wind's legacy as he now lays to rest, is the joy that he brought literally to hundreds of families, either through owning one of his foals or just for having interacted with him as he helped promote the Buckskin industry at horse fairs around the country. Undun Wind's get have been seen competing at Buckskin shows throughout the country for the past twenty years and are still showing today. There is no doubt that Undun Wind has left his mark on the Buckskin industry and will be forever remembered as one of the all-time greats. His legacy will live on forever in the memories for all who had the honor to know this one in a million stallion or to own one of his foals.

Ladies & Gentlemen, I present to you Bob & Marlene Dreifke, the owners of the incredible stallion, UNDUN WIND.

Respectfully Submitted,

Michele Zimmerman